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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower  
Developments in Indochina*

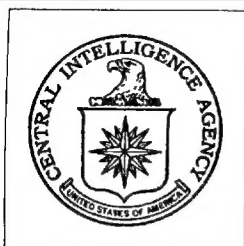
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1 May 1973

### Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower Developments in Indochina

Significant Communist supply deliveries continue to be detected throughout most of Indochina.

- The North Vietnamese are completing important new road construction through Communist-controlled territory in the western portion of South Vietnam's MRs 1 and 2.
- Gaps in the construction remain; however, the Communists may intend to develop an in-country supply corridor from the DMZ to MR 3.

On the manpower side the following developments were noted during the week:

- No infiltration groups, either regular or special-purpose, were detected entering the infiltration pipeline in North Vietnam.
- Additional evidence shows that elements of the 304th NVA Division are now located in both southern North Vietnam and northern South Vietnam.
- The 275th NVA SAM Regiment, possibly equipped with SA-3 missiles, is deploying southward to the Vinh area of North Vietnam.

Note: Comments and queries regarding this publication are welcomed. They may be directed to [redacted] the Office of Economic Research, [redacted]

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## DISCUSSION

## Recent Communist Logistical Developments

*North Vietnam*

1. Communist logistic activity detected in southern North Vietnam in late April reflected a pattern similar to that of recent weeks. Small deliveries of rice continue to be dispatched from Binh Tram 18 in the Vinh area toward northern Laos, but there was little evidence in COMINT of supply deliveries from Binh Tram 18 to the south. Farther south, however, a high level of activity continues in the Binh Tram 26 area, around Dong Hoi. On 26 April the binh tram revealed that nearly 2,000 vehicles had transited its area, possibly during April. The vehicles, more than half of them probably southbound, had passed a vehicle checkpoint near the Giang River. Binh Tram 26's summer work schedule was apparently started on 15 April and is to last until mid-October. By specifying that personnel are to work only a 7-1/2-hour day and to have time out for sports and other activities, the schedule implies that the resupply goals of the binh tram are being met fairly easily.

2. Part of the sustained activity noted in the Binh Tram 26 area may be the result of a recent dramatic increase in coastal shipping in that vicinity. Since mid-April the North Vietnamese Naval Headquarters in Hanoi and Naval Coastal Surveillance stations have reported large numbers of "friendly" supply vessels operating around Hon La, Quang Khe, and Dong Hoi. These are areas in which North Vietnamese domestic shipping authorities are located; however, the recent heavy involvement of NVA logistic elements around Dong Hoi makes it likely that some – possibly a significant portion – of this coastal activity involves supplies destined for Communist forces in the south.

*Southern Laos and Cambodia*

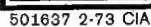
3. Various intelligence sources continue to reflect heavy Communist resupply activity under way throughout the Laotian Panhandle and Cambodia. For the second week

[redacted] a drop in vehicle  
detections. [redacted]

[redacted] Photography,  
for example, continued to show a high level of Communist vehicle activity under way on roads south of the Ban Karai Pass and west of the DMZ.

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4. The concentration of vehicle activity through southern Laos remains on the central corridor, comprising Routes 99, 9211, and 958. On 23 April, at least 262 cargo trucks were noted moving or parked along Route 99 alone. COMINT revealed that roads in the central Panhandle were generally clear and that vehicles were moving without incident. Vehicle activity on feeder Routes 9 and 922 to South Vietnam also was heavy. [redacted] photography revealed about 70 cargo trucks moving east on Route 9. On the same day, COMINT indicated that 95 vehicles had arrived at Binh Tram 42, now operating along Route 922. On the previous day, Binh Tram 42 reported that 222 vehicles -- capable of carrying almost 900 tons of cargo -- were to be dispatched to South Vietnam's B-4 Front over an unspecified period.

5. Very large quantities of supplies are apparently still moving in the Group 470 area of southern Laos and eastern Cambodia. An intercepted message of 26 April reported 172 vehicles active within its area on 25 April and a plan for the movement of 64 vehicles on the 26th. US aerial observers continue to report heavy Communist vehicle activity on the main logistical corridors in eastern Cambodia. Sightings of barges on the Tonle Kong near Siem Pang show that substantial tonnages also are being moved on the waterways.

6. Route 19 leading from Stung Treng into the B-3 Front remains a major supply route. Pilots regularly report that damaged fords, bridges, and road cuts on Route 19 are back in service within hours or a few days. Along the new north-south bypass route paralleling Route 13, pilots reported that several new large storage-like structures have been built. Routes leading south from this new artery appear to be carrying a significant level of traffic toward southern South Vietnam. The presence of bulldozers and roadgraders on a new cross-border route from Mimot may indicate a planned increase in the use of the corridor.

#### *South Vietnam*

7. Extensive new Communist roadbuilding in South Vietnam has recently been detected in photography. Along the western borders of MRs 1 and 2, a new road trace and clearing paralleling 7 miles of Route 548 between A Luoi and Ta Bat airfields may be an effort to shorten the distance along this mountainous segment. To the south, additional construction extending Route 614 is under way. The new construction adds another 4 miles of motorable road south of the A Chau Valley and leaves only an 18-mile gap to road clearing operations on Route 14.

8. In the highlands of MR 2, Communist engineers are rapidly building a major new motorable road south through western Pleiku and

Darlac Provinces. Between 29 March and 16 April, at least 52 miles of new road had been cleared from the Route 19 border crossing south into Darlac Province [redacted] The new roadway probably extends some distance farther south. If the Route 614/14 linkup and further work on Route 14 are completed, an in-country motorable north-south logistical corridor from the DMZ into northern MR 3 would be available.

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9. Photography also shows 8 miles of new road construction in coastal Binh Dinh Province, extending eastward from Route 514 to within 5 miles of Sa Huynh. [redacted] the Communists are planning to move armor over this route after it is completed.

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10. Meanwhile, evidence of significant Communist logistic activity in South Vietnam persists. Large numbers of trucks were again photographed in northern Quang Tri Province, and COMINT indicated that Binh Tram 12, near Quang Tri City, may be resuming the use of boats to move supplies. Near the A Shau Valley, traffic along Route 548 was particularly heavy on 25 April, when 60 trucks were observed. Logistic elements subordinate to Group 473, which encompasses all of northern MR 1, continue to report substantial supply deliveries and extremely large quantities of supplies -- primarily ordnance -- in storage. As of 29 April, three major storage facilities in northern MR 1 reportedly had 7,670 tons of supplies on hand, roughly the same quantity reported in recent weeks.

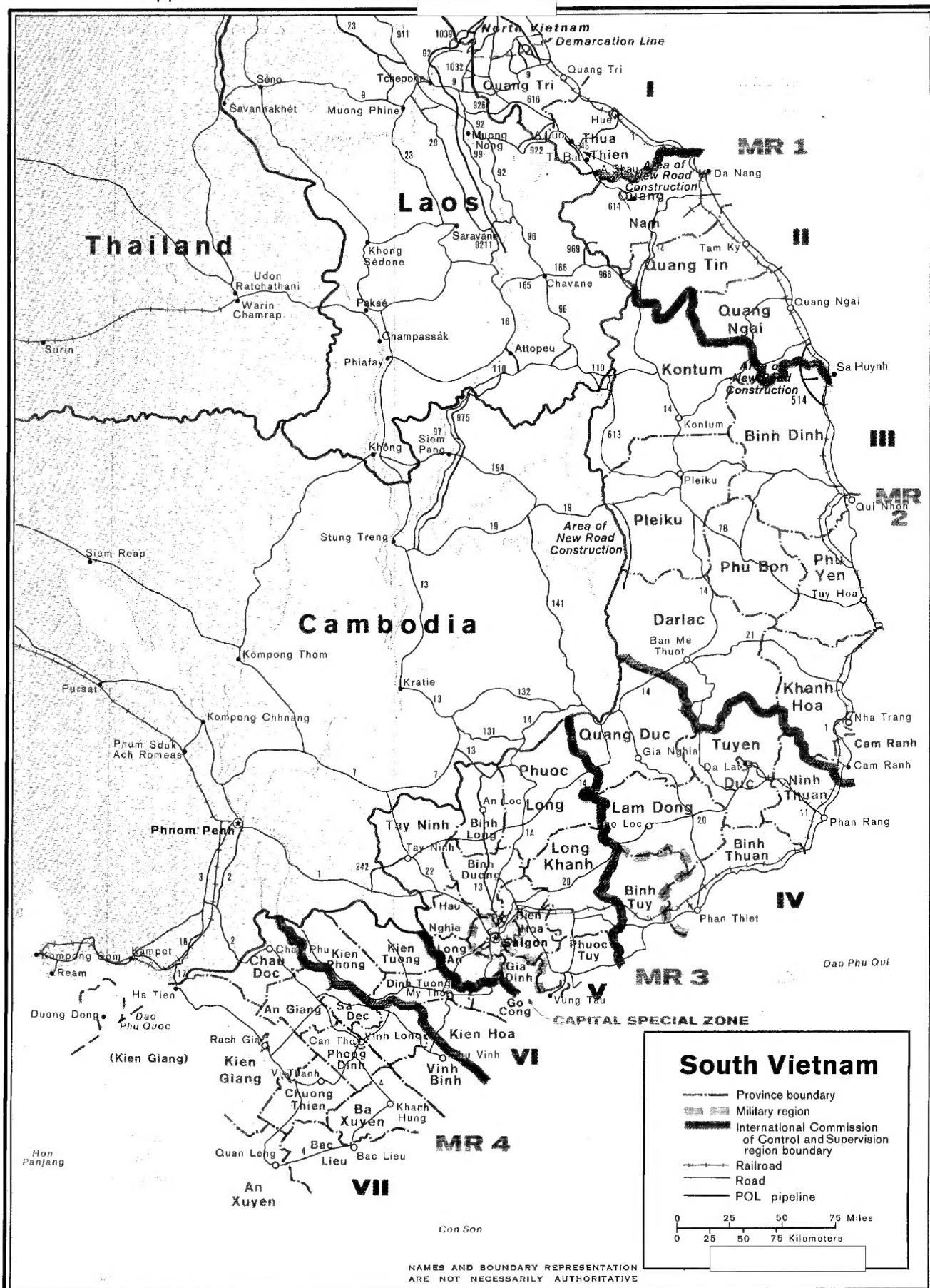
11. In South Vietnam's MR 2, a newly constructed base camp about 15 miles southwest of Kontum City was reportedly receiving and caching ammunition and other supplies in mid-April.

12. In MR 3 the Communists have recently increased supply movements from Cambodia into Phuoc Long and northern Long Khanh Provinces. Since late March, South Vietnamese air observers have sighted numerous trucks moving southward through the two provinces, some towing heavy artillery and antiaircraft pieces. Elsewhere in MR 3, [redacted] COSVN's 83rd Rear Service Group received additional trucks in mid-April to ease the distribution of supplies to forces in Binh Duong Province. The new complement reportedly brings the Group's inventory to a total of 32 Soviet and captured US trucks. Fuel for them reportedly is purchased locally. They have recently moved 107-mm rockets and 105-mm howitzer ammunition from Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces into Binh Duong.

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## Recent Manpower Developments

### *Personnel Infiltration*

13. No new regular or special-purpose groups were detected departing from North Vietnam during the past week. The only detections represented 13 special-purpose groups, with an estimated aggregate strength of about 225 men, moving southward in the Laotian Panhandle. It is now estimated that some 15,500 infiltrators have started south since 28 January. Our estimates of infiltration starts since 1 September 1972 and since 1 January 1973 are shown in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

**Table 1**

#### **Infiltration Starts, by Season**

Destination	1 Sep 71 - 29 Apr 72	1 Sep 72 - 29 Apr 73
<b>Total</b>	<b>115,000</b>	<b>86,500</b>
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	17,000	26,000
MR 5	16,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,500
Southern Laos/MR 559	14,000	11,000

**Table 2**

#### **Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline Since 1 January 1973**

	<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Special-Purpose<sup>2</sup></b>
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250
12-18	2,000	850

Table 2  
(Continued)

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline  
Since 1 January 1973

	Total <sup>1</sup>	Special-Purpose <sup>2</sup>
19-25	500	500
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300
12-18	550	550
19-25	650	650
26-1 Apr	200	200
2-8	175	175
9-15	75	75
16-22	125	125
23-29	0	0

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001 through 7009. Assuming that these groups departed between 1 January and 10 March, some 4,500 combat troops would be spread over the departures estimated for those weeks.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

*Unit Redeployments in South Vietnam*

14. Recently available COMINT has indicated that major elements of the 304th NVA Division are located in both southern North Vietnam and northern South Vietnam. Since mid-January, North Vietnamese civil communications have located elements of the division headquarters and major elements of its three subordinate regiments in southern North Vietnam. In early April the division's regiments terminated communications with the senior tactical control authority in South Vietnam's northern MR 1, suggesting their possible withdrawal to North Vietnam. Nonetheless, the 304th Division headquarters still communicates on a regular basis with its subordinate regiments and the senior tactical control authority in northern MR 1, suggesting a continued presence there. In addition, COMINT through mid-April has identified other elements of the division headquarters in the western DMZ area, and a regiment of the 304th was noted assuming a tactical posture southwest of Quang Tri City on 16 April. This contrasting information suggests that the 304th could either be rotating its combat units to North Vietnam for rest and refitting or that it could

be in the process of withdrawing entirely to the north. There is no additional evidence on the redeployment status of the 312th NVA Division -- believed to be withdrawing to North Vietnam. The division's headquarters was again located in North Vietnam last week -- in southern Thanh Hoa Province -- apparently en route to its garrison area.

15. COMINT has identified another NVA antiaircraft artillery regiment -- the 245th -- operating in the vicinity of Khe Sanh. This deployment increases the total number of Air Defense Command regiments located in the Khe Sanh area to five -- four antiaircraft artillery and one SAM. Other air defense forces in the area include a number of antiaircraft artillery units subordinate to the General Directorate of Rear Services.

*Unit Redeployments in North Vietnam*

16. The 275th NVA SAM Regiment, formerly located in northern Thanh Hoa Province, is currently deploying southward in North Vietnam and probably will operate in the vicinity of Vinh. The regiment may be equipped with SA-3 missiles -- first confirmed in North Vietnam in January 1973 -- as subordinate elements have made references to SA-3 equipment over the past few months. If the regiment is equipped with SA-3 missiles, it will increase Hanoi's air defense capabilities against relatively low flying aircraft in the major troop staging and logistic center in the Panhandle.

## Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

## South Vietnam

## Regular Combat Forces

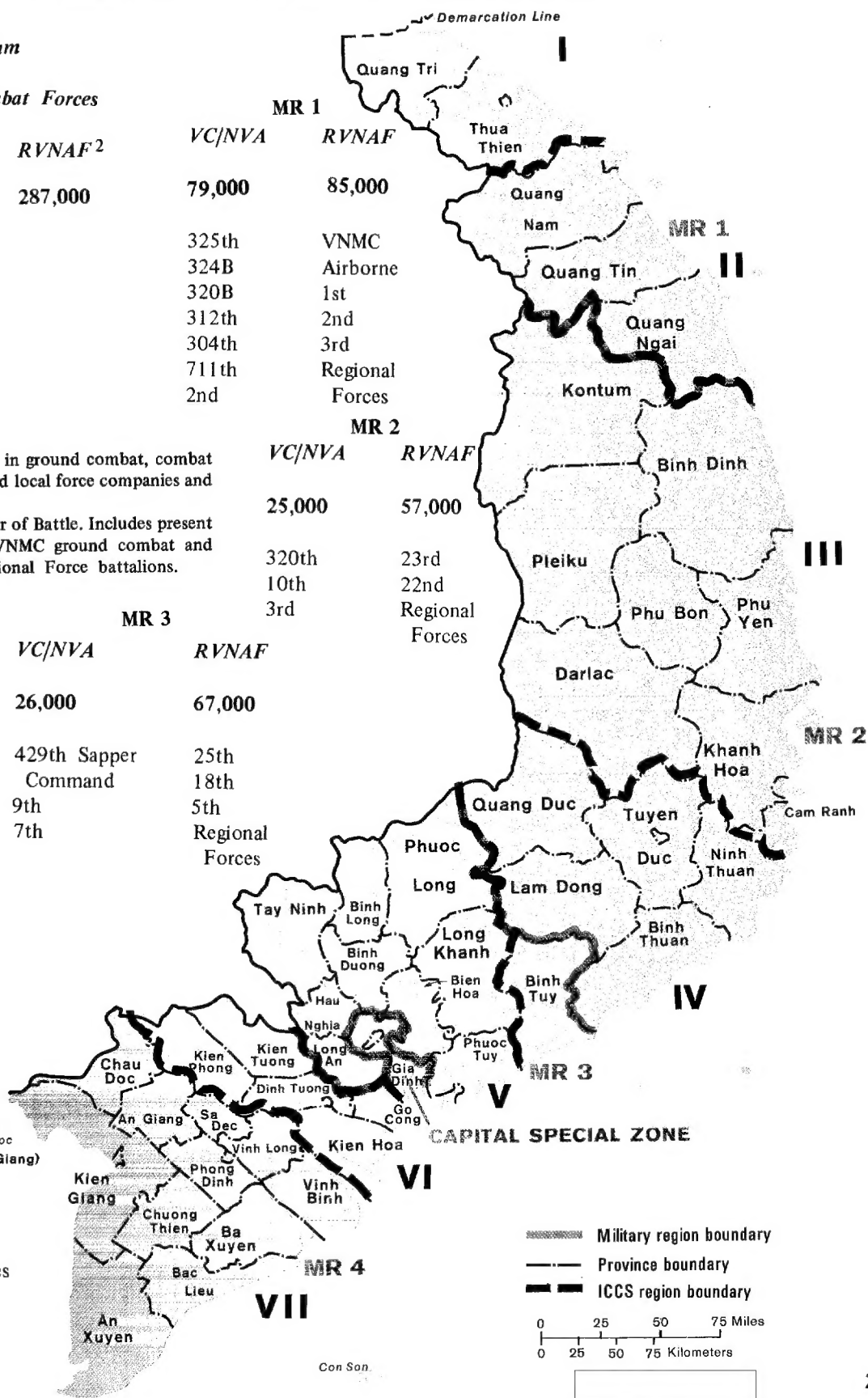
VC/NVA <sup>1</sup>	RVNAF <sup>2</sup>	VC/NVA	RVNAF
156,000	287,000	79,000	85,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		320B	1st
		312th	2nd
		304th	3rd
		711th	Regional Forces
		2nd	

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions.

VC/NVA	RVNAF
26,000	67,000
429th Sapper Command	25th
9th	18th
7th	5th
	Regional Forces

VC/NVA	RVNAF
26,000	78,000
5th	21st
1st	9th
	7th
	44th Special Tactical Zone
	Regional Forces



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